

1. (Once Amended) An isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
- a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1,
 - b) a polypeptide comprising a naturally occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, and
 - c) an immunogenic fragment of a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

2. (Once Amended) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

3. An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 1.
4. An isolated polynucleotide of claim 3, having a sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.
5. A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.
6. A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 5.
8. A method for producing a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:
- a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1, and
 - b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.
9. An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide of claim 1.

10. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,
- b) a naturally occurring polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence at least 90% identical to a polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,
- c) a polynucleotide having a sequence complementary to a polynucleotide of a),
- d) a polynucleotide having a sequence complementary to a polynucleotide of b) and
- e) an RNA equivalent of a)-d).

11. An isolated polynucleotide comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 10.

12. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 10, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

13. A method of claim 12, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

14. A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 10, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and

- b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

15. A composition comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

B2 16. (Once Amended) A composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

18. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

44. A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

45. A method of screening for a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under suitable conditions, and
- b) detecting binding of the polypeptide of claim 1 to the test compound, thereby identifying a compound that specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 1.

46. A method of screening for a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1, said method comprising:

- a) combining the polypeptide of claim 1 with at least one test compound under conditions permissive for the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1,
- b) assessing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound, and
- c) comparing the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound with the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the absence of the test compound, wherein a change in the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1 in the presence of the test compound is indicative of a compound that modulates the activity of the polypeptide of claim 1.